







Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers August 3, 2006

Latest Traffic Safety News

Traffic Crashes, PUBLIC HEALTH ENEMY #1?

Although more people are killed on the roads every month than died in the World Trade Center attack in 2001, Americans can't seem to muster much outrage about the death rate from motor vehicle crashes. The May cover story in Minnesota Medicine laments the fact that the public remains largely disinterested in mortality rates for motor vehicle crashes. Jon Roesler, an epidemiologist in the injury and violence prevention unit of the Minnesota Department of Health says that he can drum up data on everything from bites to burns. But he can't quite put his finger on one number—the figure that will help people view traffic crashes as public health enemy No. 1. "If we could come up with one graph that would just tell the story," he says wistfully, noting that in his line of work there's usually an "aha" moment when a number or a set of numbers vividly depicts a problem, making it clear in the public's mind. "What's the 'aha' for motor vehicle crashes?" he asks. That's a question that vexes nearly everyone working on traffic safety. Minnesota Medicine, May 2006, Volume 89. For further information, http://www.mmaonline.net/Publications/MNMed2006/May/feature-peota.htm

Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention Used to Reduce Impaired Driving

Through a grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the American Public Health Association (APHA) is creating a three-year Public Health Traffic Safety Institute. The first year of the institute will focus on promoting alcohol screening and brief intervention in emergency departments and other health care settings. 50 registrants at the 134th APHA Annual Meeting in Boston in November will be trained on alcohol screening and brief intervention. "Screening and brief intervention has been shown to be useful in recognizing individuals with alcohol problems, motivating them to reduce their consumption and is a valuable strategy to help prevent impaired driving," said Mighty Fine, MPH, APHA's public health analyst. For more information on NHTSA's strategy for alcohol screening and brief intervention, visit www.nhtsa.dot.gov

Cell Phones And Driving: Review Of Research

The research literature on drivers' use of cell phones was reviewed to identify trends in drivers' phone use and to determine the state of knowledge about the safety consequences of such use. Approximately 125 studies were reviewed with regard to the research questions, type and rigor of the methods, and findings. The study concluded that even if total compliance with bans on drivers' handheld cell phone use can be achieved, crash risk will remain to the extent that drivers continue to use or switch to hands-free phones. Although the enactment of laws limiting drivers' use of all phones is consistent with research findings, it is unclear how such laws could be enforced. At least in the short term, it appears that drivers' phone use will continue to increase, despite the growing evidence of the risk it creates. More effective countermeasures are needed but are not known at this time. McCartt AT, Hellinga LA, Bratiman KA. Traffic Injury Prev 2006; 7(2): 89-106.

The Use Of Seat Belts In Cars With Smart Seat Belt Reminders--Results Of An Observational Study

The study objective was to determine if there were differences in driver's seat belt use between cars with and without smart seat belt reminders (SBR). By increasingly reminding drivers and passengers if they are not using the seat belt, the intention is to increase the belt use to almost 100%. In cars













without SBR, 82.3 percent of the drivers used the seat belt, while in cars with SBR, the seat belt use was 98.9 percent. The difference was significant. In cars with mild reminders, the use was 93.0 percent. It is concluded, that if the results can be generalized to the whole car population this would have a dramatic impact on the number of fatally and seriously injured car occupants. Krafft M, Kullgren A, Lie A, Tingvall C. Traffic Injury Prev 2006; 7(2): 125-9.

Business Travelers Have Tools To Avoid Traffic

Business travelers can chose from a growing number of tools that can be used to avoid traffic. Next month Avis and Budget begin renting Where2 global positioning devices at 125 locations in the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico. The devices, which cost \$9.95 per day, monitor traffic and suggest alternate routes in about 50 cities. The traffic information is fed into the system by Clear Channel's Total Traffic Network that collects real-time traffic data and predicts vehicular flow. Motorists in 25 states can dial 511 to receive "real-time information on traffic conditions and incidents. All states are expected to have this capability by 2010. By dialing Traffic.com's 866-MY-TRAFC (698-7232) motorists can receive reports on traffic conditions in 50 metropolitan areas. Seven cellphone carriers offer Rand McNally Traffic, which supplies phone users with text messages and maps about traffic conditions in 94 metropolitan areas. Many state and city sites have links to webcams where viewers can look at how fast vehicles are moving on local roads. Source: USA TODAY, 7/25/2006

New Gadget Reads E-mail In Your Car

Now drivers have hands-free access to their email. A Canadian company has introduced iLane, a device about the size of a PDA that uses Bluetooth short-range wireless technology and a voice-based interface to notify the driver of incoming messages. The driver can then listen to the entire e-mail, forward it or compose a response; and handle meeting requests using verbal commands. The system also handles phone calls and text messages. "The objective is to improve driver safety," iLane product manager Ben Miners said. "We know people are taking their BlackBerries and PDAs out while and typing in them while they are driving, and this allows them to keep their hands on the wheel and their eyes on the road." For further information, http://www.ilane.com

Insurance Institute: ESC Benefits Equal To Safety Belts/Airbags

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) recently updated its study on the effectiveness of electronic stability control (ESC) and found that ESC reduces the risk of all single-vehicle crashes by more than 40 percent — and fatal ones by 56 percent. The study shows that ESC could prevent nearly one-third of all fatal crashes and reduce rollover risk by as much as 80 percent. Susan Ferguson, senior vice president for research, said that ESC is second only to safety belts in terms of life-saving benefits. IIHS estimated that if all new vehicles sold in the U.S. were equipped with ESC, 10,000 fatal crashes could be prevented each year. Currently, ESC comes standard on 40 percent of 2006 models and is optional on another 15 percent. For further information, www.iihs.org

Increased Safety Features for Vehicle Buyers But At What Cost?

Frost & Sullivan's recent analysis surveyed 1,200 Canadians who purchased or leased a new light vehicle in the past four years. Respondents answered questions on their safety awareness, perceptions of current safety systems, collision vulnerability, perceptions of vehicle safety, privacy and driver control, preferred systems, pedestrian protection, purchase preferences, and purchase influence. The analysis looked at the prices that customers were willing to pay for various safety systems, factors that influence their choices of safety systems, and the importance of NHTSA and IIHS safety ratings in vehicle purchase decisions. Typically, vehicle makers introduce new technologies in upscale vehicles at high prices. Over time, they redesign the systems to reduce costs, even as they













become more effective, and volume builds, which allows manufacturers to realize economies of scale. For further information, http://www.transportation.frost.com

Strategic Principles of Drink-Driving Enforcement

Australia's Monash University Accident Research Centre has produced a report that explores operational principles of drink-driving enforcement and examines issues associated with drivers who have not been influenced by current enforcement methods. The report also reviews research needs in the area of drink-driving enforcement.

News from the USDOT

Large Truck Crash Causation Study Finds Passenger Car D

The Large Truck Crash Causation Study, the first-ever national study to attempt to determine the critical events and associated factors that contribute to serious large truck crashes is now available to the public. The three-year data collection project conducted by the Federal motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), found that driver behavior -- not other factors such as weather, road conditions, and vehicle performance -- is more likely to be the cause of a crash involving large trucks and other vehicles. The study also found that passenger car drivers were more likely at fault than truck drivers in those cases. According to former FMCSA Administrator Annette M. Sandberg, "The multitude of data now available will allow us to analyze specific areas of behavior and work with our industry and safety partners to develop an agenda on driver safety that will improve commercial motor vehicle driver performance." The complete report can be downloaded at this URL: http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/ltccs/default.asp

Work-Life

NHTSA's "Ease of Use" Child Safety Seat Survey: Clearer Labels & Instructions for 2006

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released its 2006 "Ease of Use" Child Passenger Safety Seat Ratings based on their survey of 99 car seats and booster seats made by 14 different manufacturers. The agency uses a grading system of A, B, or C to denote how easy it is to use the safety seats. The top grade is an A. In addition to the overall rating, NHTSA also uses the letter grading system to denote how well the child safety seats perform in five individual categories: assembly requirements; clarity of labeling; clarity of written instructions; ease of securing a child and ease of installation in a vehicle. The 2006 ratings represent approximately 95 percent of safety seats currently available to consumers. Of the 99 seats rated, 85 received an overall score of A. As in 2005, there were no safety seats that received an overall "C" rating; however, there were several "C" scores in individual categories. To view the full 2006 ratings, http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CSSRating/Index.cfm

Child Safety Advocates Differ on Best Way to Reduce Backover Incidents

The safety group, Kids and Cars estimates that at least 2 children are killed every week by backover incidents most often by a parent, grandparent, or neighbor. Safety advocates share the goal of reducing backover injuries and deaths but disagree about how to do that. Many pushing for rear-view cameras with video screens in all vehicles. Others say education is more effective, because it gets people in the "mind-set" to think about children. NHTSA must complete a study of the effectiveness of backover technology in the next 2 months. Safe Kids Worldwide is launching a public education campaign funded in part by GM. A Consumers Union study found rear cameras "extremely effective"













in preventing backovers while a VA Tech study for GM found at least 50% of drivers with backover prevention systems still hit unexpected obstacles.

Chevrolet, Safe Kids Worldwide, Cub Scouts Team Up in Vehicle Safety Program

Chevrolet, along with Safe Kids Worldwide, is teaming up with the Cub Scouts to help 6 to 10 year-olds learn about vehicle safety. The program looks at several aspects of safety, including proper safety belt/booster seat usage, how to contact OnStar in the event of an emergency, preventing trunk entrapment, and teaching families to never leave a child alone in a vehicle. The program will start in Charlotte, NC, then will expand to reach Cub Scouts in other cities across America. Chevy and Safe Kids will also learn from the experience. As each child begins the program, a short questionnaire will measure what kids already know. At the end of the program, their knowledge will be measured again to see how much information was learned. For further information,

http://www.gm.com/company/gmability/safety/news_issues/releases/072106_chevrolet-partners-w-kids.html .

Giving Up Driving May Be Express Lane to Long-Term Care

A Johns Hopkins School of Medicine study concludes that taking the keys from older drivers has long-term consequences. The study findings published in the July issue of the American Journal of Public Health, included extensive interviews conducted over a 10-year period with 1,593 seniors between 65 and 84 years of age who live in the small, eastern shore town of Salisbury, Md. "We are not recommending continuation of driving for seniors who are a threat to themselves or others on the road," said Ellen Freeman, Ph.D., an epidemiological researcher now working with the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute and the study's lead author. "Instead, we hope that understanding the very real health impact that losing the ability to drive has on seniors will encourage families to plan contingencies to assist elderly members with transportation issues."

New Rules By CPSC for ATVs Not Enough

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) approved new safety rules for all-terrain vehicles. While the CPSC rejected requests for a ban on the sale of ATVs for use by children under 16, the new rules were designed to make ATVs safer for children. Consumer groups see move as irresponsible since 90% of ATV-related child fatalities occur w/ kids riding adult models. They wanted a sales ban on ATVs by use of children under the age of 16 For further information, http://www.cpsc.gov/

International Traffic Safety News

London Cyclists May Need License Plates To Catch Lawless Riders

Bicyclists in London could soon be attaching license plates to their bikes under plans being drawn up by London's mayor. All bicycles would be registered so that riders breaking the law, by cycling on pavements or going through red lights, could be caught on traffic cameras. Concern has increased over the behavior of cyclists because the number of people cycling in the capital has risen by 50 percent in the past five years with 450,000 cycle trips in London every day.

Speed Cameras In Belgium Fail To Reduce Roadway Deaths

A new study has revealed that speed cameras have successfully reduced the number of traffic accidents, but not the number of fatalities or injuries on Flemish roads. The speed cameras have reduced the number of accidents with deaths or injuries by 'just' 7 to 9 percent, much lower than in other countries. That is significantly lower than internationally, where the number of accidents with injuries have been reduced by up to 28 percent, newspaper 'De Standaard' reported.













New Technology Brings Medical Expertise To Wherever Emergencies Occur

Emergency personnel often lack the trauma expertise necessary to treat victims of severe crashes or other emergencies. Some victims die because they do not reach hospital emergency rooms fast enough. But now a system for remote treatment, the Milan-based DICOEMS could help improve survival rates. With seven partners from five European countries, the 30-month project developed a wireless technology platform enabling doctors in hospital emergency rooms to remotely manage treatment of accident and other emergency victims. With specially equipped handheld computers or smart phones, paramedics and other emergency personnel first on the scene can send images and critical patient information, including vital data such as pulse, respiration, and ECG, to specialists at hospital emergency departments. Doctors can monitor the patient's condition via streaming video from the ambulance, make a diagnosis and provide detailed medical procedures for paramedics to follow. This could significantly improve survival rates for victims of crashes. For further information, http://www.innovations-report.com/html/reports/medicine health/report-68334.html

World Road Safety Legislation Database

The United Nation's World Health Organization (WHO) has created an online database that provides information on road safety legislation in countries around the world. The data have been collected with input from WHO partner organizations around the world and contain information on legislation around a number of risk factors for road traffic injuries, including speed limits, seat belt and child restraint use, helmet use, blood alcohol limits, daytime running lamps, and mobile phone use.





